

And I appreciate the fact that Prime Minister Tony Blair is willing to help that process by holding a conference with Palestinians that will help develop the state. And if the free world focuses on helping the Palestinians develop a state and there is leadership willing to accept the help, it's possible to achieve peace. And there are responsibilities for all parties. The Palestinians have responsibilities. The Israelis have responsibilities. The Americans have responsibilities. The EU has responsibilities. But we all have got to keep the big vision in mind in order to achieve the objective.

Listen, thank you all very much. I wish everybody—truly wish everybody a happy holidays. For those of you coming to Crawford, I look forward to not seeing you down there. [*Laughter*]

Thank you all.

Crawford Pirates

Q. Are you going to the Rose Bowl?

The President. No, I won't be going to the Rose Bowl. I'll be watching the Rose Bowl.

And by the way, in case you're not following high school football in Texas—atta boy, Jackson [David Jackson, Dallas Morning News]—the Crawford Pirates are the State 2A, Division II champs. And we look forward—don't we—to wave the championship banner above the Crawford High School.

All right, happy holidays.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10:32 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Gen. George W. Casey, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; professional baseball player Johnny Damon; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; Osama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; Joyce Rumsfeld, wife of Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. He also referred to the President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security (Moynihan Commission). The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this news conference.

Proclamation 7857—To Implement the United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement

December 20, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

1. On May 18, 2004, the United States entered into the United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement (USAFTA). The USAFTA was approved by the Congress in section 101(a) of the United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act (the "USAFTA Act") (Public Law 108-286, 118 Stat. 919) (19 U.S.C. 3805 note).

2. Section 105(a) of the USAFTA Act authorizes the President to establish or designate within the Department of Commerce an office that shall be responsible for providing administrative assistance to panels established under Chapter 21 of the USAFTA.

3. Section 201 of the USAFTA Act authorizes the President to proclaim such modifications or continuation of any duty, such continuation of duty-free or excise treatment, or such additional duties, as the President determines to be necessary or appropriate to carry out or apply Articles 2.3, 2.5, and 2.6, and the schedule of reductions with respect to Australia set forth in Annex 2-B, of the USAFTA.

4. Section 203 of the USAFTA Act provides certain rules for determining whether a good is an originating good for the purpose of implementing preferential tariff treatment under the USAFTA. I have decided that it is necessary to include these rules of origin, together with particular rules applicable to certain other goods, in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTS).

5. Section 206 of the USAFTA Act authorizes the President to take certain enforcement actions relating to trade with Australia in textile and apparel goods.

6. Sections 321-328 of the USAFTA Act authorize the President to take certain actions in response to a request by an interested party for relief from serious damage or actual threat thereof to a domestic industry producing certain textile or apparel articles.

7. Executive Order 11651 of March 3, 1972, as amended, establishes the Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements (CITA) to supervise the implementation of textile trade agreements.

8. Section 604 of the Trade Act of 1974 (the "1974 Act") (19 U.S.C. 2483), as amended, authorizes the President to embody in the HTS the substance of relevant provisions of that Act, or other acts affecting import treatment, and of actions taken thereunder.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, acting under the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including but not limited to sections 105(a), 201, 203, 206, and 321–328 of the USAFTA Act, section 301 of title 3, United States Code, and section 604 of the 1974 Act, do proclaim that:

(1) In order to provide generally for the preferential tariff treatment being accorded under the USAFTA, to set forth rules for determining whether goods imported into the customs territory of the United States are eligible for preferential tariff treatment under the USAFTA, to provide certain other treatment to originating goods for the purposes of the USAFTA, and to provide tariff-rate quotas with respect to certain originating goods, the HTS is modified as set forth in Annex I of Publication No. 3722 of the United States International Trade Commission, entitled *Modifications to the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States Implementing the United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement* (Publication 3722), which is incorporated by reference into this proclamation.

(2) In order to implement the initial stage of duty elimination provided for in the USAFTA, to provide tariff-rate quotas with respect to certain originating goods, and to provide for future staged reductions in duties for originating products of Australia for purposes of the USAFTA, the HTS is modified as provided in Annex II of Publication 3722, effective on the dates specified in the relevant sections of such publication and on any subsequent dates set forth for such duty reductions in that publication.

(3) The Secretary of Commerce is authorized to exercise the authority of the President

under section 105(a) of the USAFTA Act to establish or designate an office within the Department of Commerce to carry out the functions set forth in that section.

(4) (a) The amendments to the HTS made by paragraphs (1) and (2) of this proclamation shall be effective with respect to goods entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after the relevant dates indicated in Annex II to Publication 3722.

(b) Except as provided in paragraph 4(a) of this proclamation, this proclamation shall be effective with respect to goods entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after January 1, 2005.

(5) The CITA is authorized to exercise the authority of the President under section 206 of the USAFTA Act to exclude textile and apparel goods from the customs territory of the United States; to determine whether an enterprise's production of, and capability to produce, goods are consistent with statements by the enterprise; to find that an enterprise has knowingly or willfully engaged in circumvention; and to deny preferential tariff treatment to textile and apparel goods.

(6) The CITA is authorized to exercise the authority of the President under sections 321–328 of the USAFTA Act to review requests, including allegations of critical circumstances, and to determine whether to commence consideration of such requests; to cause to be published in the *Federal Register* a notice of commencement of consideration of a request and notice seeking public comment; to determine whether imports of an Australian textile or apparel article are causing serious damage, or actual threat thereof, to a domestic industry producing an article that is like, or directly competitive with, the imported article; and to provide relief from imports of an article that is the subject of such a determination; and if critical circumstances are alleged, to determine whether there is clear evidence that imports from Australia have increased as the result of the reduction or elimination of a customs duty under the USAFTA, whether there is clear evidence that such imports are causing serious damage, or actual threat thereof, to a domestic industry producing an article that is like, or directly competitive with, the imported article, and whether delay in taking

action would cause damage to that industry that would be difficult to repair; and to provide provisional relief with respect to imports that are subject to an affirmative determination of critical circumstances that is necessary to remedy or prevent the serious damage.

(7) All provisions of previous proclamations and Executive Orders that are inconsistent with the actions taken in this proclamation are superseded to the extent of such inconsistency.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 22, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 23.

Remarks Following a Visit With Wounded Troops at Walter Reed Army Medical Center

December 21, 2004

Laura and I have just come from a remarkable place called the Fisher House, a facility where wounded soldiers and their families are provided comfort during their trials. And we just want to thank the people who have supported the Fisher House, thank the folks here at Walter Reed for providing such incredibly good health care.

Today we had a rocket attack that took a lot of lives. Any time of the year it's a time of sorrow and sadness when we lose a loss of life. This time of year is particularly sorrowful for the families as we head into the Christmas season. We pray for them. We send our heartfelt condolences to the loved ones who suffer today. Just want them to know that the mission is a vital mission for peace. The idea of a democracy taking hold in what was a place of tyranny and hatred and destruction is such a hopeful moment in the history of the world.

And I want to thank the soldiers who are there and thank those who have sacrificed and the families who are worried about them

during this Christmas season for their sacrifices. This is a very important and vital mission. I'm confident democracy will prevail in Iraq. I know a free Iraq will lead to a more peaceful world. So we ask for God's blessings on all who are involved in that vital mission.

Thank you very much. Have a good holiday.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:07 p.m.

Statement on Signing the Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004

December 21, 2004

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 3242, the "Specialty Crops Competitiveness Act of 2004" (the "Act"). The Act is designed to increase the competitiveness of fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and nursery crops grown in the United States.

Section 1408A of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended by section 303 of the Act, purports to require the Secretary of Agriculture to take into consideration certain advisory board-approved findings and recommendations in preparing the Secretary's annual departmental budget proposal to the President and to disclose to the Congress how the Secretary addressed each such recommendation. The executive branch shall construe section 1408A in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch, to require the opinions of principal officers of the executive departments, to recommend for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President shall judge necessary and expedient, and to withhold information the disclosure of which could impair the deliberative processes of the Executive or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 21, 2004.

NOTE: At the time of publication, H.R. 3242, approved December 21, had not been received by the Office of the Federal Register for assignment of a Public Law number.